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STATE FOR INL/AAE (BALABANIAN), INL/C, SCA/CEN (O'MARA)

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: DRUG AND CRIME REPORT FOR 2007

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¶1. According to the Statistics Committee of the Procurator General's Office, 10,502 drug-related crimes were committed during 2007. The number of individuals that committed these crimes decreased 1.2% to 8,147. Drug seizures in 2007 decreased 6.2% from the previous year. Total seizures in 2007 were 23.479 metric tons, including 522 kilograms of heroin and 335 kilograms of opium. The number of registered drug addicts increased 1.6% to 55,286.

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DOMESTIC INITIATIVES  
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¶2. On December 12, Saparbek Nurpeisov, Official representative of the Procurator General's Office (PGO), announced that the PGO submitted a proposal to the government to institute mandatory drug tests for all minors (under 16 years old) and students. He stated that such a measure will protect the rights of children. The proposal anticipates the participation of doctors specialized in drug addiction to conduct examinations of students from schools, colleges and higher education institutes. According to the PGO's statistical data, there has been a 10-fold increase in the number of registered drug addicts in the last 15 years; the increase among teenagers over the same time has been 18-fold. Currently, 55,286 people are registered by treatment facilities, 4,104 of which are minors. The population of Kazakhstan is over 15.5 million people.

¶3. In a newspaper interview, Chairman of the Committee on Combating Drugs Maratkali Nukenov said that, within the "Astana - Drug Free City" program, voluntary testing took place among students during medical exams. He explained that early detection of a drug problem lessens the chance of becoming an addict. In five schools in Kokshetau (Akmolinskaya oblast), 2,627 students were drug-tested and the number of children testing positive increased from three the previous year to nine in 2007.

¶4. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) stated that 2,258 crimes were detected with the help of the civilian population. In 2007, local governments allotted 29 million tenge (approximately \$240,000) for programs to encourage citizens to participate in crime prevention programs. Local executive bodies gave rewards to 3,932 people for providing information about criminal activity, including homicides, robberies, and the sale of narcotics and psychotropic substances.

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CHILD DRUG COURIERS  
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¶5. During the Shekara-2007 (Kazakh for Border) operation, the Border Guard Service (BGS) of the Committee for National Security (KNB) seized ten packages containing 10 kilos of heroin from children's backpacks. The Tajik children, ages 10 and 12, were

accompanied by their mother as they illegally crossed the border from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan. The family crossed through the green zone, avoiding the Saryagash checkpoint. The Tajik mother was charged with illegal trafficking of drugs in large amounts.

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POLICE CORRUPTION  
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¶ 6. The Almaty Department of National Security arrested three police officers for selling drugs. The policemen were selling heroin, previously seized as evidence. The drugs were sold to local users, who were then arrested. The police then requested a bribe to drop the case. Master Sergeant Talgat Bekzhanov was sentenced to ten years in prison for illegal purchase, transportation, and storage of drugs with the intent to sell. Due to the frequency of such cases, the MVD has proposed draft amendments to the Criminal and Administrative Codes to allow for the destruction of seized drugs with only a small sample kept as evidence. The MVD hopes that these amendments will put a stop to evidence being resold by police. They believe that one of the main reasons for drug-related crimes committed by police is low salaries. However, police also want bonuses or other recognition for seizures.

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MAJOR OPERATIONS  
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¶ 7. In 2007, the KNB closed 21 distribution networks used by traffickers and arrested 252 people for involvement in trafficking. More than a metric ton of narcotics, including 688 kilograms of heroin and opium, were seized. The KNB and its counterparts from Russia, Uzbekistan, and Germany jointly carried out three operations, crushing five trans-national drug rings and cutting off some transit routes from Afghanistan. Ninety-five kilos of drugs

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were seized, 54 criminal cases were initiated, and 23 people were convicted in 2007 in Astana as part of President Nazarbayev's "Astana - Drug Free City" campaign. Furthermore, two large drug rings that operated in some cities were wiped out during Operation Eastern Safari and Operation Typhoon. Twenty-one people were arrested and more than 160 kilos of opium and heroin were seized. In 2007, the KNB closed warehouses used by traffickers in Almaty (0.5 kilos of cocaine and 14.6 kilos of opium seized), Pavlodar (21.5 kilos of heroin seized) and Kostanai (127 kilos of opium and 3 kilos of heroin seized).

¶ 8. The Barrier-2007 interagency operation resulted in the seizure of 378 kilos of drugs and over 210 weapons and pieces of ammunition, 537 criminal cases, and the arrests of 665 people. The operation, conducted throughout Kazakhstan from November 20 to December 15, focused on drug trafficking through the borders and on the transportation arteries roads. The KNB, MVD, the Customs Control Committee of the Ministry of Finance (Customs Committee), and the Agency on Combating Economic and Corruption Crime (Financial Police) assigned officers to 319 mixed mobile groups to participate in the operation. The mobile groups patrolled the entire border and all major international and national highways.

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LEGISLATION  
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¶ 9. The Interfax-Kazakhstan news agency reported that the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) has approved a bill to increase criminal penalties for drug-related crimes, including life imprisonment. Vice Minister of Internal Affairs Kalmukhanbet Kassymov stated that life imprisonment will be appropriate in cases of the sale of drugs in educational institutions, sales to minors, sales of large amounts by organized criminal groups, or involvement in a death caused by overdose. The bill also allows for the temporary suspension or closure of bars and clubs in which narcotics are used.

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
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¶10. The pilot phase of the Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Center (CARICC) was launched on November 1, 2007 in Almaty. During the pilot phase, UNODC is assisting CARICC to recruit staff, design databases, construct communications infrastructure, and renovate its facilities. CARICC will be fully operational after the Russian Federation signs the CARICC Agreement.

¶11. The Federal Service on Drugs Control (FSKN) of the Russian Federation assigned a representative to Kazakhstan. On November 15, Colonel Sergei Varnin was officially assigned to the Russian Embassy and has been empowered to officially represent the FSKN in its relationship with Kazakhstan in the area of countering drugs.

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